

# John Steinbeck:

## An Inventory of His Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

---

### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Steinbeck, John, 1902-1968
<b>Title:</b>	John Steinbeck Collection
<b>Dates:</b>	1926-1977
<b>Extent:</b>	12 boxes (5 linear feet), 3 galley files
<b>Abstract:</b>	Handwritten and typescript articles, novels, and short stories, and correspondence with Steinbeck's editor, Pat Covici, make up the bulk of the collection.
<b>Call Number:</b>	Manuscript Collection MS-04002
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Access</b>	Open for research

---

### Administrative Information

<b>Acquisition</b>	Purchases and gifts, 1958-1997
<b>Provenance</b>	A large portion of the materials in the John Steinbeck Collection were originally acquired at part of the Pascal Covici Collection in 1969.
<b>Processed by</b>	Chelsea S. Dinsmore, 2000
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a>

---

## Biographical Sketch

Born in 1902, the third of four children, John Steinbeck was the only son of John Ernst and Olive Hamilton Steinbeck. Raised in the family home in Salinas, California, Steinbeck roamed the woods and explored Monterey Bay and the Big Sur. He was not a motivated student, but he knew from an early age that he wanted to write. He graduated from Salinas High School in 1919 and entered Stanford University, which he attended intermittently until 1925. He often took time off in order to earn money for the following term's tuition and took a variety of jobs including clerk, surveyor, and ranch hand. In 1923 Steinbeck took a class in marine biology which sparked a life long interest in the subject. He left Stanford in 1925 without graduating.

Steinbeck began writing fiction in college and published a few pieces in the school paper. When he left school he decided New York was the place for an aspiring writer to be, so he took a job on a freighter and headed East. Less than a year later, discouraged by his lack of success, he returned to California on another steamer. He spent the next couple of years working as a handyman and caretaker at a Lake Tahoe estate and in February 1928 he finished his first novel *Cup of Gold*. Later that year he met Carol Henning, whom he would marry two years later. At the end of the year he moved to San Francisco, where Henning had a job, moved in with a friend who was also a budding writer, and began working on his second novel.

*Cup of Gold* was published in 1929 and Steinbeck and Henning were married in 1930. The couple lived simply, largely supported by Steinbeck's father. Steinbeck published *Pastures of Heaven* (1932) and *To a God Unknown* (1933) in quick succession, but the bankruptcy of his publisher left him without any consistent means of income from his writing. The couple moved into the Steinbeck family's cottage in Pacific Grove and, as the grip of the Depression tightened, lived largely on what they could grow or catch in the sea. Steinbeck traveled in California a great deal during the Depression and he wrote about what he saw. What some critics consider his greatest works were published during the thirties including *Tortilla Flat* (1935), *Of Mice and Men* (1937), *The Red Pony* (1937), and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939).

Early in 1941 Steinbeck separated from Henning and in the fall moved to New York City with Gwyndolyn Conger. His divorce became final in 1942 leaving him free to marry Conger in early 1943. Steinbeck left almost immediately to travel to Europe as a foreign correspondent for the *New York Herald Tribune*. Gwyndolyn had two children with Steinbeck, Thom in 1944 and John in 1946. The couple moved back and forth between New York and California during the forties and divorced in 1948.

Steinbeck met his third wife, Elaine Scott, in 1949 and they married in 1950. They lived primarily in the New York City area, spending part of each winter in Mexico or other warm climes, and in 1955 they bought a summer cottage in Sag Harbor. Steinbeck continued to write, varying his steady stream of novels with plays and screen adaptations. Many of his novels were performed on stage or made into movies. In 1960, despite illness, Steinbeck took a cross-country trip with only a French poodle for company. The diary of this trip became *Travels with Charley* (1962). His last novel,

*The Winter of Our Discontent*, was published in 1961. After traveling to Stockholm in 1962 to accept the Nobel Prize for Literature, Steinbeck's health began to decline. He had been suffering small strokes for several years, and they began to worsen. He died at home in 1968.

---

## Sources

*Dictionary of Literary Biography -- Volume 9: American Novelists, 1910-1945*. James J. Martine, Ed. (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1981).

Parini, Jay. *John Steinbeck: A Biography*. (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1994).

---

## Scope and Contents

Holograph and typescript articles, novels, and short stories, and correspondence with his publisher make up the bulk of the John Steinbeck Collection, 1926-1977. The collection is organized into four series, arranged alphabetically by author or title and chronologically where possible: Series I. Works, 1926-1966 (9 boxes); Series II. Correspondence, 1932-1964 (1 box); Series III. Personal Papers, 1943-1946 (1 folder); and Series IV. Third-Party Works and Correspondence, 1939-1977 (2 boxes). These papers were previously accessible through a card catalog, but have been re-cataloged as part of a retrospective conversion project. Adrian Goldstone materials that were formerly part of the Steinbeck collection have been withdrawn and cataloged separately.

The Works Series contains draft and proof versions of many of Steinbeck's better known novels as well as dozens of articles written during his travels in Europe and while reporting on national political conventions, and numerous short stories, scripts, and screenplays. Of particular interest may be the journal Steinbeck kept while envisioning *Grapes of Wrath* and complete holograph and typescript versions of *East of Eden*. Also present are the novel, play, and radio play versions of *The Moon Is Down* as well as holograph versions of *Pastures of Heaven*, *Tortilla Flat*, and *The Wayward Bus*. Individual titles are listed in the Index of Works at the end of this guide.

The Correspondence Series is composed of letters to and from Steinbeck. Over 500 letters between Steinbeck and his editor, Pascal "Pat" Covici, represent the bulk of this series with additional letters from Steinbeck to Ben Abramson, Robert Ballou, and others. Correspondents are listed in the Index of Correspondence at the end of this guide.

The small Personal Papers series contains notes, a memorandum of agreement, and Steinbeck's war correspondent identity card. The Third-Party Works and Correspondence Series contains a number of works by Steinbeck's friends and associates as well as a few letters. Of note is a typescript of Oscar Hammerstein's *Pipe Dream*, a play adaptation of Steinbeck's *Sweet Thursday*, a draft television adaptation for *Travels with Charley*, and a number of letters from Steinbeck's third wife Elaine. Individual titles and correspondents are listed, by author, in the Index of Works by other Authors

and the Index of Correspondence at the end of this guide.

Elsewhere in the Ransom Center are about 60 photographs of Steinbeck and his family, and eleven Vertical Files containing newspaper clippings with biographical information and literary criticism in addition to published articles by Steinbeck.

---

## Related Material

Other materials associated with John Steinbeck may be found in the following collections at the Ransom Center:

- Adams, James Donald
  - Anderson, Maxwell
  - Armitage, Merle
  - Conrad, Joseph
  - Covici, Pascal
  - Dobie, J.F.
  - Downing, Robert
  - *Genesis West*
  - Goldstone, Adrian
  - *Harpers*
  - Jeffers, Robinson
  - Masters, E.L.
- 

## Index Terms

### Correspondents

Abramson, Ben  
Ballou, Robert  
Covici, Pascal, 1885-1964  
Steinbeck, Elaine

### Subjects

Arthur, King--Fiction  
Authors, American--20th century

Community life--Monterey, California--Fiction

Depression--1930s--United States

**Document Types**

Galley proofs

---

**Series I. Works, 1926-1966**

Unidentified; A-C	<b>box 1 folder 1</b>
<i>America and the Americans</i> , typescript with author revisions, 1966, 148pp	<b>folder 2</b>
<i>Arthur</i> , carbon copy, 546pp	<b>folder 3-5</b>
<i>Bombs Away: The Story of a Bomber Team</i> , unrevised galley proofs, bound, 86pp	<b>folder 6</b>
<i>Cannery Row</i> , unrevised galley proofs, bound, 1944, 112pp	<b>box 2 folder 1</b>
D-H	<b>folder 2</b>
<i>East of Eden</i>	
Holograph with author revisions, includes journal entries and messages to Pascal Covici written on versos of pages, 1951, 540pp (oversize box)	<b>box 4 folder 1-5</b>
Typescript and carbon copy with author revisions, includes sketches, paste-ups, and front matter, 1952, 950pp	<b>box 2 folder 3-6</b>
Typescript, cont.	<b>box 3 folder 1-2</b>
Galley proofs, unrevised, 1952 (removed to Galley Folder 1)	
Discarded pages, holograph, typescript and carbon copy pages with author revisions, 1952, 523pp	<b>folder 3-4</b>
<i>Grapes of Wrath</i> Journal, two sets of combined typescript and carbon copy, 1938-41, 158pp (includes a letter to Pascal Covici, 1950, 2pp)	<b>box 5 folder 1</b>
I-O	<b>folder 2</b>
<i>In Dubious Battle</i> , holograph in bound notebook, 79pp	<b>folder 3</b>
<i>The Moon Is Down</i> (novel)	

Bound galley proofs, unrevised, ca. 1941, 74pp	<b>box 5 folder 4</b>
Publisher's dummy, 1942, 16pp	
<i>The Moon Is Down</i> (play)	
Typescript with minor revisions, 136pp	<b>folder 5</b>
Carbon copy, 121pp	<b>folder 6</b>
Typescript with stage directions and minor revision, 124pp	<b>folder 7</b>
Typescript copy, 103pp	<b>box 6 folder 1</b>
Production materials, correspondence, actor biographical sketches, playbills, promotional materials, and reviews, 1942	<b>folder 2</b>
<i>The Moon Is Down</i> (radio production), script samples, final script, and correspondence related to production, 1942	<b>folder 3</b>
<i>Murder at Full Moon</i> (published under pseudonym Peter Pym), bound typescript, 233pp	<b>folder 4</b>
"One American in Paris," 17 various typescript articles, some with multiple copies	<b>folder 5</b>
"Once There Was A War," galley proofs, 1958, 83pp (removed to Galley Folder 2)	
<i>The Pastures of Heaven</i>	
Holograph with author revisions in a bound notebook, ca. 1937, 115pp	<b>folder 6</b>
Radio script (adapted by Elizabeth Lomax), copy with producer's notes, 1946, 180pp	<b>folder 7</b>
<i>The Pearl</i>	
<i>La Perla of Le Paz</i> , typescript, 102pp	<b>box 7 folder 1</b>

Galley proofs, unrevised, 1947, 74pp	<b>folder 2</b>
R-S	<b>folder 3</b>
"A Russian Journal," unrevised page proofs, 1948, 218pp (removed to Galley Folder 3)	
<i>Sea of Cortez</i>	
Page proofs, unrevised, 1941, 287pp	<b>folder 4</b>
Galley proofs, unrevised, 1941, 165pp	<b>folder 5</b>
<i>The Short Reign of Pippin IV</i>	
"Bourbon on the Rocks," typescript, 61pp	<b>folder 6</b>
Typescript and carbon copy, 219pp	<b>folder 7</b>
Carbon copy, 271pp	<b>folder 8</b>
Galley proofs, 111pp	<b>box 8 folder 1</b>
<i>Sweet Thursday</i>	
Typescript and carbon copy with author revisions, 352pp	<b>folder 2-3</b>
Galley proofs, unrevised, 190pp	<b>folder 4</b>
Discarded pages, holograph and typescript with author revisions, 28pp	<b>folder 5</b>
<i>Tortilla Flat</i> , holograph with author revisions, 67pp (includes: "The Murder," "The Chrysanthemums," "The Red Pony: The Promise," and "The Leader of the People")	<b>folder 6</b>
W	<b>folder 7</b>
<i>The Wayward Bus</i>	
Holograph with author revisions in two bound notebooks, 1946, 145pp	<b>box 9 folder 1-2</b>

Typescript and carbon copy with author revisions and printer's markings, bound,  
553pp **folder**  
3

Advance galley proofs, 1947, 177pp **folder 4**

Galley proofs, unrevised, 1947, 110pp **box 10**  
**folder 1**

*Zapata*, screenplay, two copies, 328pp **folder**  
2-3

**Series II. Correspondence, 1932-1964**

A-Z	<b>box 10 folder 4</b>
Abramson, Ben (from Steinbeck), 1935-41	<b>folder 5</b>
Ballou, Robert Oleson (from Steinbeck), 1932-41	<b>folder 6</b>
Covici, Pascal	
(from Steinbeck), 1937-42, nd	<b>folder 7</b>
(from Steinbeck), 1943-48	<b>folder 8</b>
(from Steinbeck), 1949-56	<b>folder 9</b>
(from Steinbeck), 1957-1960	<b>box 11 folder 1</b>
(from Steinbeck), 1961-64	<b>folder 2</b>
(to Steinbeck), 1938-64	<b>folder 3</b>

**Series III. Personal Papers, 1943-1946**

Notes and identification papers, 12pp

**box 11 folder**  
4

**Series IV. Third-Party Works and Correspondence, 1939-1977**

## Works, 1952-1975

A-Z **box 11 folder 5**

Cox, Martha Heasley, "In Search of John Steinbeck: His People and His Land,"  
typescript, 1975, 27pp **folder 6**

Hammerstein, Oscar, *Pipe Dream*, script with production notes, 1955, 230pp **folder 7**

The John Steinbeck Bibliographical Society, report, 1968, 15pp (three copies) **folder 8**

Moore, Harry Thornton, excerpts from *The Novels of John Steinbeck*, typescript  
biographical sketch and bibliographical checklist, 15pp **box**  
12  
**folder**  
1

Peckinpah, Sam, "Travels with Charley in Search of America," draft television  
script, 1963, 43pp **folder 2**

Simmonds, Roy S., "A Note on Steinbeck's Unpublished Arthurian Stories" (11pp),  
"The Crazy Man with Long Hair who lived up to the Frenchman's..." (19pp), "The  
Original Manuscripts of Steinbeck's 'The Chrysanthemums'" (9pp), "Steinbeck's  
'The Murder': A Short Critical and Bibliographical Study" (11pp), typescripts, some **folder 3**  
with author revisions

## Correspondence, 1939-1977

A-Z **box 12 folder 4**

Steinbeck, Elaine, 1951-64 **folder 5**

**John Steinbeck Collection--Index of Correspondents**

Box and folder numbers are followed by a number in parentheses which indicates the number of items by that person. A single item is indicated where there is no number in parentheses following the box and folder number. Where there is correspondence from John Steinbeck, the number in parentheses is followed by the phrase "from Steinbeck." So in the example:

Covici, Pascal, 1885-1964--10.7-11.2 (363 from Steinbeck), 11.3 (188)

there are 363 letters from Steinbeck to Covici in box 10, folder 7 through box 11, folder 2, and 188 letters from Covici in box 11, folder 3.

- Abramson, Ben--10.5 (10 from Steinbeck)
- Altschule, Arthur--12.4
- Ballou, Robert--10.6 (20 from Steinbeck)
- Benchley, Nathaniel, 1915- --12.4
- Breit, Harvey--10.4 (from Steinbeck)
- Cohn, Lewis Henry--12.4
- Covici, Pascal, 1885-1964--10.7-11.2 (363 from Steinbeck), 11.3 (188)
- Deutsch,- --10.4 (from Steinbeck)
- Gage, William R.--12.4
- Groves, John Stuart--10.4 (from Steinbeck)
- Hoskins, Dorothy M.--10.4
- Lovejoy, R.--12.4
- Otis, Elizabeth--10.4, 12.4
- Steinbeck, Carol--12.4 (2)
- Steinbeck, Elaine A.--12.4 (2), 12.5 (35)

**John Steinbeck Collection--Index of Works**

- "Aboard the Saturnia"--1.1
- Alarums and excursions--1.1
- *America and the Americans*--1.2
- "And did you once see Shelley Plain?"--1.1
- *Arthur*--1.3-5
- "Atavism and Old Lace"--1.1
- Autograph hunters act like vultures...--1.1
- "The Bettencourt"--1.1
- *Bombs Away: The Story of a Bomber Team*--1.6
- "Breaking Through the Etruscan Barrier"--1.1
- *Cannery Row*--2.1
- "Case of the Hotel Ghost-Or What Are You Smoking Mr. S.?"--1.1
- "Clean Out the Ice Box"--1.1
- ""A Clear and Present Danger"--1.1
- Closed circuit speech for Senator Kefauver--1.1
- "Critics, Critics, Burning Bright"--1.1
- "Dateline--Dealers Choice"--2.2
- "Dateline-Farewell, Oh! Ship of State"--2.2
- "Dateline-Heaven"--2.2
- "Dollars for Democrats"--2.2
- "Droppings from the Cow Palace"--2.2
- *East of Eden*--2.3-3.4, 4.1-5, Galley Folder 1
- "Eggheads of the World, Arise"--2.2
- "Excavations at St. Peter's"--2.2
- "Explosion of the Chariot"--2.2
- "The Game of Authors"--2.2
- "The Genius of da Vinci"--2.2
- *Grapes of Wrath* journal--5.1
- "Gusher, Florentine Style"--2.2
- "The Hostess with the Mostess in the Hall"--2.2
- "How Mr. Horgan Robbed a Bank"--2.2
- "I'd Rather Be Wrong"--5.2
- *In Dubious Battle*--5.3
- "It"--5.2
- "It's a Treat to Beat Your Feet"--5.2
- "Just Thinking of the Hills of Home-Homesickness May not be Fatal, But It Seems to be Unavoidable"--5.2
- "Maybe Cat did Look at the Queen, But Mr. S. Saw Tykes and a Plume"--5.2
- "The Milly-Milly"--5.2
- "Monecasque Fallout"--5.2
- *The Moon Is Down*--5.4-6.3
- *Murder at Full Moon*--6.4
- "My War with the Ospreys"--5.2
- "The Noblest Roman of the All"--5.2
- "Note to Rome: Don't be a Goose"--5.2
- "Nothing Like Selecting Miss France to Cure Sophisticated Stomach-Ache"--5.2
- "On All Your House"--5.2
- "On Both Your Houses"--5.2
- "Once There Was A War"--Galley Folder 2

- Open letter to the Russian people--5.2
- *The Pearl*--7.1-2
- "A Rationale"--7.3
- "Red Novelist's Visit Produces Uneasy Talk"--7.3
- "Robert Capa"--7.3
- "Roots"--7.3
- "A Russian Journal"--Galley Folder 3
- "Salinas Is"--7.3
- *Sea of Cortez*--7.4-5
- "See Naples and Die"--7.3
- "She Was a Widgeon of Delight"--7.3
- "The Short Rain of Criticism"--7.3
- *The Short Reign of Pippin IV*--7.6-8.1
- "Sir Richard Grenville Fell"--7.3
- "Something Ain't Good? Blame It on the Comet"--7.3
- "The Summer Before"--7.3
- *Sweet Thursday*--8.2-5
- "Three Coins Down the Drain"--7.3
- *Tortilla Flat*--8.6
- *The Wayward Bus*--9.1-10.1
- "What Kind of New America"--8.7
- "When Swedes Welcome Summer"--8.7
- "With Your Wings"--8.7
- *Zapata*--10.2-3

**John Steinbeck Collection--Index of Works by other Authors**

- *Baltimore Sun*
- "John Steinbeck and the Red Faced Reds"--11.5
- Cox, Martha Heasley
- "In Search of John Steinbeck: His People and His Land"--11.6
- Hammerstein, Oscar
- ● *Pipe Dream*--11.7
- John Steinbeck Bibliographical Society
- Report no. 1 (1968)--11.8
- Moore, Harry Thornton
- Excerpts from  
*The Novels of John Steinbeck*--12.1
- *Parisian Review*
- No. 48, Fall 1969--12.2
- Peckinpah, Sam
- ● *Travels with Charley* (TV Script)--12.3
- Simmonds, Roy S.
- "The Crazy Man with Long Hair Who Lived Up to the Frenchman's: A Historical, Comparative, Textual and Bibliographical Study of John Steinbeck's Short Story "How Edith McGillcuddy Met Mr. R.L. Stevens""--12.4
- "A Note on Steinbeck's Unpublished Arthurian Stories"--12.4
- "The Original Manuscript of Steinbeck's "The Chrysanthemums""--12.4
- "Steinbeck's "The Murder:" A Short Critical and Bibliographical Study"--12.4
- Skidmore, Hubert
- "John Steinbeck"--11.5
- Unidentified author
- God, star, so quantitatively small...--11.5